

LA CIUDAD DEL TRABAJO

(CITY OF WORK)

Un film de
Guillermo G. Peydró

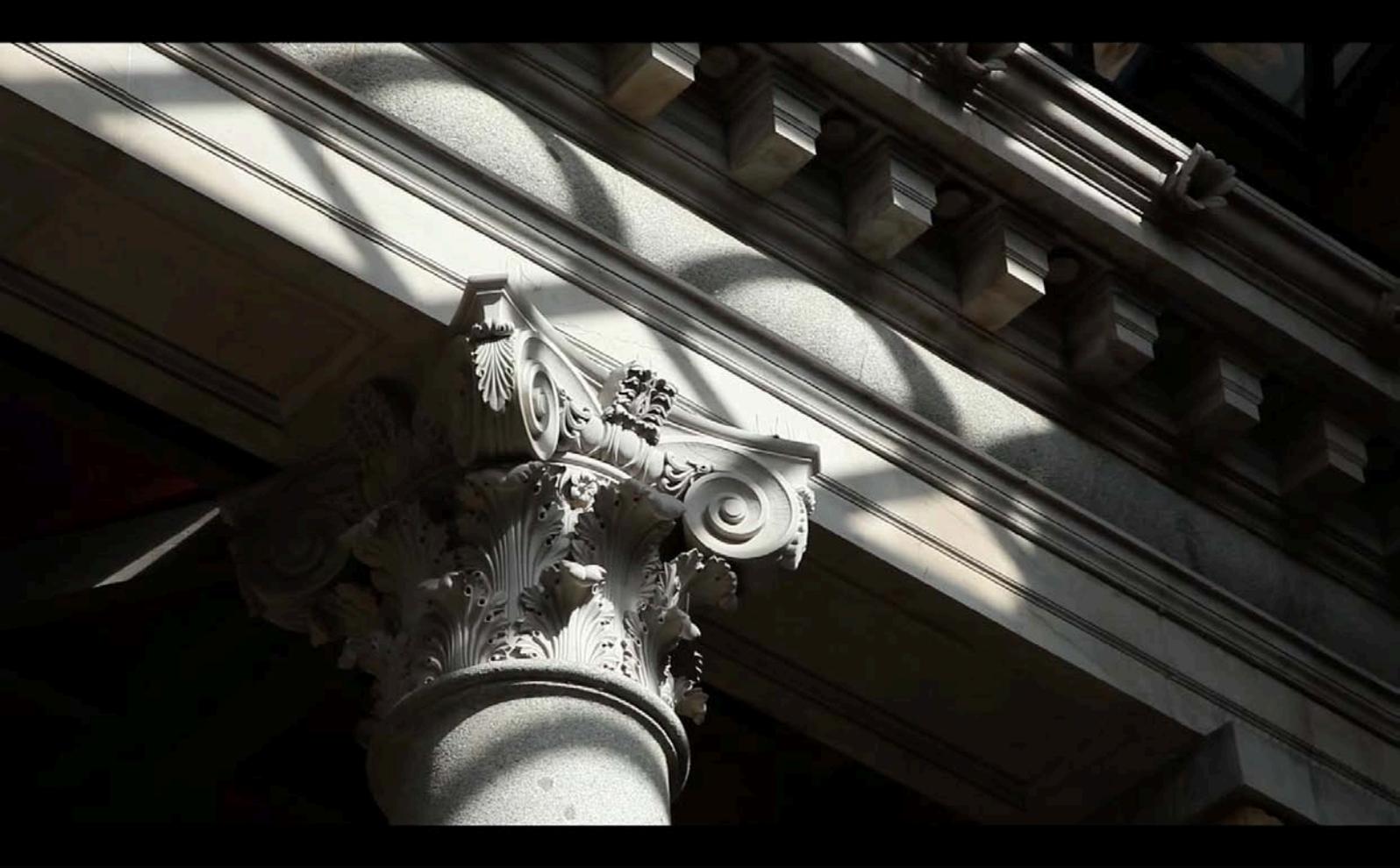
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CITY OF WORK (La Ciudad del Trabajo, Guillermo G. Peydró, 2015)

Synopsis

Gijón's Labor University is the maximum example of monumental architecture during the Franco autarchy in Spain (1939-1959). A boarding school for a thousand children, this socio-educational laboratory enacted the aspired future shape of the country's imposed "New Order". Using audio fragments of films from the two first decades of dictatorship, this film essays complementary ways to reveal the implications of this building-city, its ambiguous position between utopia and dystopia and its unique architecture, straddling the inventions of Piero della Francesca and Piranesi.





THE LABOR UNIVERSITY (LA UNIVERSIDAD LABORAL)

Gijón's "Labor University" is one of the largest architectural enigmas of our country. The ultimate sign of monumental architecture during Franco's autarchy, its style within the classical tradition only explicitly displays some sculptural and pictorial iconography from the regime, and it is largely the result of the confluence between the imagination of a brilliant architect, Luis Moya Blanco, and unusual freedom for the time in terms of resources and ways to crystallize his imagination. Started as an orphanage project for children of miners to alleviate the discontent after the alarming increase in deaths from mining accidents when Franco multiplied coal production, for achieving the country's sufficiency, it soon became something else: the largest building in Spain, twice the size of El Escorial, with a central square the size of the Piazza San Marco in Venice, a tower inspired by the Giralda in Seville, and the world's largest elliptical church. An example of apparent sensitivity towards the working class, it tightly established the separation between the studies of children of the bourgeoisie and those of the workers' children. A building enthusiastically promoted by one of the most reactionary regime ministers, instead, the Jesuits in charge of the students allowed them to watch banned films in their cinema; an "ideal city" in design and layout, however no women or plurality of intellectual options were allowed. The most important building conceived by the Franco regime that employed the best architects, sculptors, and painters in one of his greatest propaganda operations was one which, surprisingly, Franco never deigned to visit.





All these contradictions, that never wanted or knew how to solve the Franco regime, drowned in the inconsistencies of their own political support groups, appear in the art forms contemporary to the creation of the building, and nowhere so explicitly as in cinema. Films made in Spain in the 1940s and 1950s concurrently show violent patriotism tales and anti-communist humor, light religious fables and the exaltation of death, insistence on the beauty of sacrifice for the country and the sacrifice of the woman for the man; All of this coexists with shades of increasingly open criticism of the new social contract imposed by the victors. In the cinema contemporary to the creation of the Labour University, the subconscious of the building, which is also the subconscious of an era, can be traced, helping to decipher some of its contradictions. In the audiovisual device I propose, this idea becomes explicit.

INFORMATIONS

Research, director, camera, editing: Guillermo G. Peydró

Workshops filming: Sergio Redruello

Year: 2015

Length: 61 minutes

Format: HD, 16:9

Color and B/W

Premiere: FID Marseille 2015





BIOGRAPHY

Guillermo G. Peydró (Madrid, 1981) is a filmmaker, videoartist and film programmer. He has been an External Advisor at the Modern Art Museum of Mexico DF, and also a film programmer for the International Film Festival Punto de Vista (Navarra, Spain) and for the Greenpoint Film Festival (Brooklyn, NY).

He studied Filmmaking in Madrid, completed with a specialization in Film Studies (Brookes University, Oxford), and had his PhD in Art History with a thesis on the critical dialogue between cinema and the visual arts since the advent of the 20th century. In 2014 he was invited to discuss the conclusions of his theoretical and practical work in the ACLA Seminar at the New York University, and at the Bard College.

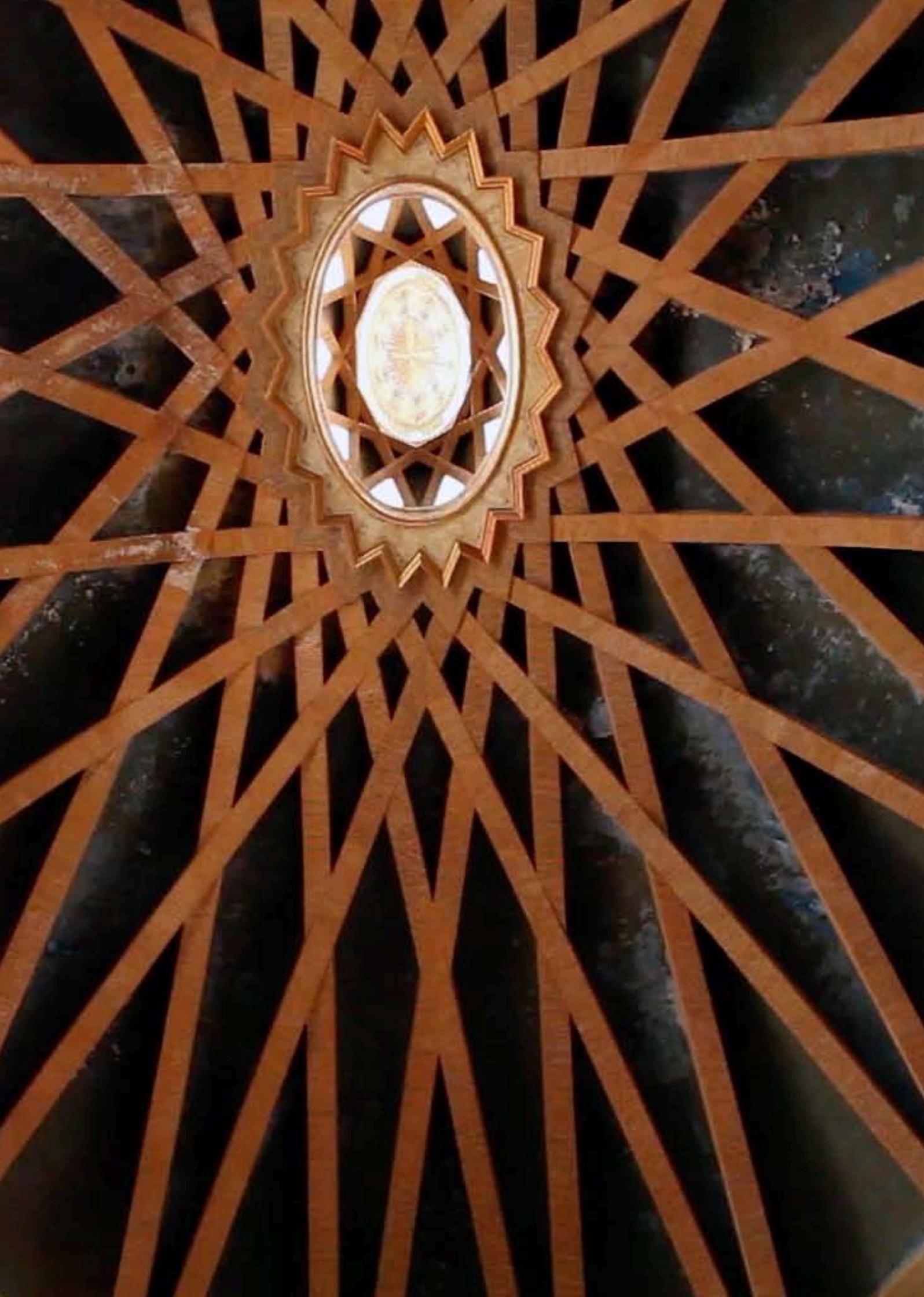
His audiovisual work explores the main questions concerned by the Essay Film form, to consider its limits and transcend them within the exhibition space. It has been exhibited in film festivals, museums, universities and galleries of sixteen countries, in theater screening format or as an installation that goes beyond the traditional screen.

FILMOGRAPHY

- El jardín imaginario* (2012) 51'
- Las variaciones Guernica* (2012) 26'
- L'année dernière à Montréal* (2013) 12'
- En contre-plongée, la mer* (2013) 25'
- Gijón (sinfonía urbana)* (2014) 17'
- Breve historia de un socavón* (2014) 3'
- La ciudad del trabajo* (2015) 62'

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- G. PEYDRÓ, Guillermo (2010), "El film-ensayo como dispositivo desmitificador: Patino, Kluge, Sokurov". Actas del XVIII Congreso Español de Historia del Arte (CEHA), Universidad de Santiago de Compostela
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“We are going to create huge labor universities, castles of a new Reconquest, where you, and above all your children, will get training not only to become efficient workers, which is not much, and it is the main thing our enemies want. We are going to create huge centers, to form technically better workers, complete men prepared for every struggle of the intelligence, trained for all battles of the spirit, politics, art, leadership, and power.”

José Antonio Girón, Minister of Labour, 1950

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